

Sinclair Broadcasting, which uses the public airwaves free of charge, is obligated by law to serve the public interest.

And yet, we hear that Sinclair plans to *force* their stations to pre-empt prime-time programming to air an anti-Kerry documentary only days before the election. Surely this must be as clear an example as possible of violation of not only the spirit of the law requiring service of the public interest, but an actual legal violation, as well.

And for the record, I would be equally outraged if a broadcaster announced plans to force stations to show "Fahrenheit 9/11" or any other anti-Bush film a couple of weeks before the election.

This incident also serves as a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. When a handful of large companies controls the airwaves, they inevitably make decisions based not on what's necessary for a healthy democracy, but rather on what is best for their own bottom lines.

Sinclair's actions point up the crucial need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard.

Thank you.